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Special
Report No. 101

Soviet Active Measures: An Update

July 1982

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs
Washington, D.C.

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This report describes Soviet "active measures" which have come to light since the publication of Special Report No. 88, "Soviet Active Measures: Forgery, Disinformation, Political Operations," in October 1981.

The Soviet Union uses the term "active measures" (*aktivnyye meropriyatiya*) to cover a broad range of activities designed to promote Soviet foreign policy goals, including undercutting opponents of the U.S.S.R. Active measures include disinformation, manipulating the media in foreign countries, the use of Communist parties and Communist front groups, and operations to expand Soviet political influence. In contrast to public diplomacy, which all nations practice, Soviet active measures often involve deception and are frequently implemented by clandestine means. Active measures are carried out not only by the KGB but also by the International Department and the International Information Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

The active measures discussed in this report are necessarily limited to those that have been publicly exposed. They make clear that these activities take place worldwide. The open societies of many industrialized and developing countries afford the Soviets opportunities to use active measures to influence opinions in favor of Soviet policies and against those of the United States and its allies. It is our hope that this report will increase public awareness and understanding of Soviet active measures and thereby reduce the likelihood that people will be deceived.

Forgeries

Forgeries are a frequently used active measures technique. Several have come to light in recent months. Their appearance has been timed to influence Western opinion on current sensitive issues. As far as we are aware, only one of these recent forgeries achieved uncritical publication.

Forgeries are usually sent through the mail to journalists, officials, or other persons who might make them available to the media. Forgeries normally do not carry a return address, nor is the sender identified in a way that can be checked. How the document was acquired invariably is vague.

The NATO Information Service Documents. In late October 1981, Spanish journalists living in Brussels received form letters purporting to come from the NATO Information Service. The letters enclosed a publicity packet that had been updated to include Spain as a new member of the alliance. As the Spanish Parliament was still debating Spain's application to join NATO, the letter could impress Spaniards as showing contempt for Spain's democratic institutions. The journalists checked with NATO, and stories in the Spanish press spoke of a forgery designed to influence Spain's domestic debate on NATO.

The President Reagan Letter to the King of Spain. In November 1981, an attempt was made in Madrid to surface a forged letter from President Reagan to the King of Spain. In terms likely to offend Spanish sensitivities, the letter urged the King to join NATO and to crack down on groups such as the "OPUS DEI pacifists" and the "left-wing opposition."

After an initial mailing to Spanish journalists failed to obtain publication, the forgery was circulated on November 11 to all delegations (except the U.S. and Spanish) to the Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), then meeting in Madrid. This time several Madrid newspapers ran stories that exposed the letter as a fabrication probably of Soviet origin.

The Clark-Stearns Letter. In January 1982, a forged letter and an accompanying research analysis dated September 23, 1981, from Judge William Clark, then Deputy Secretary of State, to the U.S. Ambassador to Greece, Monteagle Stearns, circulated in Athens. This forgery indicated U.S. support for the conservatives in the October Greek elections and alluded to a possible military coup if Socialist leader Andreas Papandreou won at the polls. On the basis of Embassy assurances that the letter was a fake, it was not initially published. Several weeks later, after copies had been circulated at the CSCE in Madrid, the Athens daily *Vrathini* published a story describing the letter as of doubtful authenticity and probably attributable to a "third-country" intelligence service.

The Swedish Mailgrams. During the week of November 8, 1981, at least 10 mailgrams—initiated by telephone calls to Western Union—were circulated to journalists in the Washington, D.C. area. Supposedly sent by U.S. Government officials, the mailgrams offered to make available the text of an alleged secret agreement for U.S. use of the Swedish base at Karlskrona for intelligence purposes.

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The mailgrams were sent immediately after the furor caused by the grounding of a Soviet submarine in restricted waters off the Karlskrona naval base. Their timing supports the conclusion that the effort was an attempt to offset the bad publicity the Soviets received from the incident.

The Haig-Luns Letter. The April 22, 1982 edition of the Belgian leftist weekly *De Nieuwe* published a letter supposedly sent in June 1979 by retiring NATO Commander Alexander Haig to NATO Secretary General Joseph Luns. Both NATO and U.S. officials branded the letter a fabrication.

The forged letter discussed a possible nuclear first strike and called for "action of a sensitive nature" to "jolt the faint hearted in Europe" opposed to intermediate-range nuclear force modernization. The timing of the false letter was related to the many antinuclear demonstrations which took place in Europe in the spring of 1982. The letter appeared again in the Luxembourg Communist Party newspaper, *Zeitung,* on May 10.

The Department of Commerce Document. In late May 1982, just before the Versailles economic summit, an alleged U.S. Government document dated February 18, 1982 circulated in Brussels. Purporting to be the recommendations of a working group on strategic economic policy chaired by the Secretary of Commerce, the document twisted U.S. policy on sensitive trade issues in a way likely to stimulate friction between the United States and its European allies. Several journalists brought the matter to the attention of U.S. officials, who promptly branded it a forgery. As far as we are aware, the media have not reported the fabricated document.

THE SECRETARY OF COMMERCE
Washington, D.C. 20230
SECRET
Name SPECIAL PRESIDENTIAL WORKING GROUP ON STRATEGIC ECONOMIC POLICY
Date February 18, 1982
Recommendations of the Special Presidential Economic Policy Working Group
Department of Commerce
Central Intelligence Agency
Department of State
Department of Treasury
FORGERY
NATO SECRET
SUPREME HEADQUARTERS ALLIED POWERS EUROPE
QUARTIER GENERAL DES PUISSANCES ALLIEES EN EUROPE
BELGIUM
FORGERY
His Excellency Joseph M.A.H. Luns
The Secretary General
North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Bruxelles/Evere Autoroute
B-1110 Brussels, Belgium
24 June 1979
Dear Joseph,
DEPARTMENT OF STATE
WASHINGTON
September 21, 1981
FORGERY
Dear Ambassador
enclosed you can find an excerpt from an analysis
dealing with the current political situation in Greece
prepared by a research institute within the framework
of the State
attention to the ideas of the
consider them to be correct.
and you to use the excerpt in
Yours truly,
William Clark
William P. Clark
October 23, 1981
His Majesty
The King of Spain
Madrid
Your Majesty:
Permit me to bring to your attention a delicate and confidential matter
which, I deeply believe, is highly important for both of our countries.
After our private talks, I learned that
oppose Spain's entry into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and
have posed new conditions for the membership of Spain. The highly
secret information I have received indicates that members of this group
come from Spain's armed forces, political parties, the government, and
even the Catholic Church. It is
the draft text of a memorandum
given by a security
I believe Your Majesty agrees
States for Spain to enter
role of the County
So, it is understandable
doubts coming from
FORGERY
Page 2
In such an instance, Your Majesty, I believe it unimaginable that America
might consider the final solution to Gibraltar in favor of Spain.
If necessary, the United States would
connection with Spain's new role which may arise
Mediterranean powers, and, on the other hand, in the
North African states with reference to
the Canary Islands.
I hope this message will strengthen
benefit immensely by joining
again assume the place she
I urge Your Majesty to
obstructing Spain's entry
Yours truly,
Ronald Reagan
Ronald Reagan
FORGERY

Media Manipulation/Disinformation

The purpose of disinformation efforts is to gain public acceptance for something that is not true. Since Soviet media lack credibility, the goal is to achieve publication of false news in reputable non-Communist media. Soviet media, such as TASS or Radio Moscow, are then able to cite credible sources in replaying a story in the hope that it will be picked up by other non-Communist media. Disinformation also is frequently placed in pro-Soviet news outlets outside the Eastern bloc in the hope that it will be replayed by independent media or simply gain acceptance through repetition.

Angola/Zaire/South Africa. One Soviet campaign has been to discredit U.S. policy in southern Africa—in particular, the credibility of U.S. efforts to solve the Namibia problem—by media stories that the United States is trying to oust the Government of Angola. A number of recent examples illustrate this effort.

- On September 15 and 23–24, 1981, the *Portugal Hoje* of Lisbon, a paper close to the Socialist Party, published reports that U.S., Zairian, and South African representatives had met secretly to conspire against the Angolan regime. The source for the story, an Angolan traveling to Lisbon, claimed he had stolen Zairian documents as proof, but he never made the documents available. Both Zaire and the United States denied the allegations. TASS promptly picked up the *Hoje* story, and in turn it was replayed in a number of African papers, including the *Jornal de Angola.*
- On December 22, 1981, *Diario de Lisboa,* a pro-Communist paper, reported that the United States was supporting "2,000 specially trained gunmen" based in Zaire to attack Angola. The State Department denied the story December 24, but TASS nonetheless picked it up. In turn, a number of African papers and radio stations and the Flemish Socialist daily *De Morgen* replayed the allegations on the basis of the TASS account.
- A similar story was carried in the April 17, 1982 Congolese newspaper *Etumba,* which alleged a meeting in 1981 between the United States, South Africa, and others to plot against Angola. The U.S. Embassy in Brazzaville promptly denied the report.

The Seychelles Coup Attempt. A day after the November 25, 1981 attempt by a group of mercenaries to overthrow the Government of the Seychelles, Soviet news reports were implying that the CIA was responsible. In keeping with frequent Soviet practice, these accusations were attributed to unnamed, and therefore unverifiable, "African radio commentaries." Despite a statement by Seychelles President France Albert René on December 2 that his government had no indication of any foreign involvement other than South African, Soviet media continued to accuse the United States. In December, several African newspapers (among them the *Nairobi Nation* and *Lagos Daily Times,* the leading dailies in Kenya and Nigeria, respectively) repeated the story. Soviet media then replayed the allegations, citing the African papers as sources.

The Pakistani Mosquitoes. In the wake of compelling evidence that the Soviets are using chemical weapons in Afghanistan and supplying mycotoxins for use in Laos and Kampuchea, Moscow has launched a disinformation effort focused on Pakistan. The February 2, 1982 *Literaturnaya Gazeta* alleged that the antimalaria program of the Pakistan Malaria Research Center in Lahore was a CIA-financed effort to breed special mosquitoes "which infect their victims with deadly viruses as part of U.S. plans to introduce biological warfare into Afghanistan." In fact, the Pakistan Malaria Research Center has been conducting antimalaria research for 20 years. Much of the funding comes from the U.S. National Institutes of Health and AID through a contract with the University of Maryland. The State Department promptly labeled the Soviet charges "utterly baseless."

The American Center Director Dr. David Nalin told the *Baltimore Sun* on February 9, 1982 that the allegations were a Soviet disinformation effort to counter U.S. "yellow rain" charges. Nonetheless, TASS continued to carry the false stories, which were replayed not only by regular disinformation outlets, such as Bombay's *Blitz* and the New Delhi *Patriot,* but also by independent newspapers not usually associated with Soviet propaganda, such as the influential *Times of India* and Pakistani daily *Jang,* and the *Muslim News* of Capetown, South Africa.

A Moscow-funded Greek Newspaper? Another way to exert media influence is by secretly subsidizing a newspaper. This may have occurred recently in Greece. In May 1982, the Athens daily *Messimvrini* charged that a new large circulation daily, *To Ethnos,* had begun publication in September 1981 thanks to a secret Soviet subsidy of $1.8 million; *Messimvrini* alleged that covert payments were continuing. The Greek Government has ordered an investigation.

Military Base Hoaxes. A disinformation staple is to float false stories about U.S. military cooperation. Recent examples from Soviet and Communist media have included false stories that the United States has or intends to establish bases on the Honduran island of Amapala, the Colombian island of San Andres, and in the Comoros Islands off the east coast of Africa. Although these have not gained credence, one relating to Pakistan attracted more attention. As a result, the Pakistan Foreign Ministry on December 10, 1981 found it necessary to deny Radio Moscow's assertion that the United States would seek military bases in Pakistan during a visit by Secretary of State Haig. Among other things, the Radio Moscow account falsely asserted that Indian Foreign Minister Rao had claimed in the Indian Parliament that Pakistan had agreed to provide bases for the U.S. Rapid Deployment Force.

Front Groups/Pro-Moscow Communist Parties

Front groups are nominally independent organizations that are controlled by the Soviets, usually through the International Department of the Central Committee of the CPSU.[1] These organizations have long sought to build support for Soviet foreign policy goals. In recent months the main thrust of front activity has been to try to see that the peace movement in Western Europe and the United States is directed solely against U.S. policy and that it avoids any criticism of the Soviet nuclear threat. The 1982 program of the World Peace Council, for example, calls for:

- "Further intensification of actions against the dangers of nuclear war and the deployment of new U.S. weapons of mass destruction in Western Europe. . . ."
- "National events (demonstrations, seminars, colloquia, etc.) with international participation 'against nuclear arms build-up and the deployment of U.S. missiles in Europe; for peace and detente in Europe.' "
- "International meeting of mayors and elected representatives (city councillors, muncipalities, etc.) and of peace forces from European towns and regions where new U.S. nuclear missiles are to be deployed. . . ."[2]

[1]See Foreign Affairs Note, *The World Peace Council, Instrument of Soviet Foreign Policy,* Department of State, April 1982. Other well-known international fronts are the International Institute for Peace (IIP), The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), the International Union of Students (IUS), the Women's International Democratic Federation (WIDF), the International Association of Democratic Lawyers (IADL), the World Federation of Scientific Workers (WFSW), the International Organization of Journalists (IOJ), the Christian Peace Conference (CPC), the International Federation of Resistance Fighters (FIR), and the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF).

[2]*World Peace Council: Programme of Action 1982* published by the Information Center of the WPC, Helsinki.

Communist parties linked with Moscow have pursued the same path. The impact of the fronts and local Communist groups varies markedly from country to country and is difficult to evaluate. Nevertheless, awareness is increasing that the Communists and their supporters are attempting to channel the peace and antinuclear movements to serve Moscow's purpose. This has led to friction within the movement in some countries.

In West Germany, after efforts by the German Communist Party (DKP) in early April 1982 produced anti-U.S. slogans without mentioning the Soviet nuclear arsenal as a threat to peace, Petra Kelly, a prominent leader of the Environment Party (the "Greens") publicly criticized the Communists. She repeated this criticism when interviewed on CBS Television during President Reagan's visit to Bonn. Similarly, in Austria, the original platform adopted by the organizers of a peace march on May 15 under pressure from pro-Moscow Communists avoided criticism of Soviet atomic weapons. The non-Communists later regrouped; as a result, the Austrian Youth Council issued a less one-sided platform.

Political Influence Operations

Political influence operations, especially those using agents of influence, are harder to detect than other active measures. In these operations, individuals disguise their KGB connection while taking an active role in public affairs. Exposure, when it occurs, is frequently the result of an espionage investigation. The scale of improper Soviet activities is reflected in the publicized expulsion of 19 Soviet officials involved in espionage and active measures cases from 10 countries during the first 5 months of 1982. Among these were the expulsion of the Soviet military attache from Washington and the uncovering of spy nets in Indonesia and Singapore.

Denmark. In October 1981, the Danish Government expelled Vladimir Merkulov, a KGB officer serving as a second secretary of the Soviet Embassy, for improper conduct, including directing the activities of Danish agent-of-influence Arne Herloev Petersen. An April 17, 1982 Danish Ministry of Justice statement detailed Petersen's work with the KGB.

- In the summer of 1981, the Soviets arranged to cover Petersen's expenses for a series of advertisements in which Danish artists expressed support for a Nordic nuclear-weapons-free zone.
- Petersen brought foreign policy documents provided by the Soviet Embassy to the North Korean Embassy; on Soviet instructions he misrepresented the documents as coming from an American journalist.
- Petersen provided information several times to the Soviet Embassy on the Danish "left wing" and on "progressive" journalists who were not Communist Party members.
- Petersen arranged for the printing of a pamphlet attacking British Prime Minister Thatcher. The text was supplied by the Soviet Embassy.

The Ministry of Justice noted that clandestine meetings between Petersen and a succession of three Soviet "diplomats" (of whom Merkulov was the latest) had extended over several years. Petersen specifically was requested by his KGB handlers not to join the Danish Communist Party.

The Danish Government decided not to prosecute Petersen, although it declared that he violated Danish law. In a television interview 2 days after the official statement, the Danish Foreign Minister challenged Petersen to sue for slander so that the full extent of the government's evidence could be made public.

Sweden. Soviet Third Secretary Albert Liepa was expelled in April 1982. According to a Swedish Foreign Ministry spokesman, Liepa had made systematic efforts to collect information on and exert influence over the Latvian exile community in Sweden. Before his assignment to Stockholm, Liepa had been chairman of a committee based in Riga concerned with maintaining "cultural ties" with Latvians living outside the Soviet Union. ■

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